

got people from community-based-program America. We've got people from all walks of life, all around the country, who are deeply concerned about making sure this country is as financially literate as possible, and I thank you for coming. I appreciate you joining us.

Mr. Secretary, thanks for chairing the project.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

### Remarks Honoring the 2007 National and State Teachers of the Year

April 26, 2007

She forgot to add "and loves a teacher." [Laughter] I made a good move when I married a teacher, and Laura and I are honored to welcome you here to the Rose Garden. Thanks for coming, and thanks for teaching.

This is a special day for all who care deeply about education, because we fully understand that without a good teacher it's hard to achieve national goals and objectives. And so the Teacher of the Year ceremony is a chance to pay homage to some really fine public servants and great Americans, so we welcome you.

I appreciate the Secretary of Education joining us. I want to thank Congressman John Boozman and his wife, Cathy, from Arkansas. We thank Jay Inslee, from Washington, for joining us; thank you, Congressman. Dennis Moore and Stephanie, from Kansas, have joined us, as has Rick Larsen from Washington. I wonder why all these Washington Congressmen have joined us. [Laughter]

Laura and I just had a chance to thank every State Teacher of the Year. It's an honor to welcome you to the Oval Office. It is a shrine to democracy and a wonderful place to give our personal thanks to a job well done.

I do want to recognize the finalists this year: Justin Minkel from Arkansas; Josh Anderson from Kansas; Tamara Tiong from New Mexico; Andrea Peterson, the Teacher of the Year. And we've got to recognize Joel, the husband of the Teacher of the Year. Thank you, Joel. [Laughter] And mom and

dad—I'm going to say something about mom and dad in a minute.

I want to thank Gene Wilhoit, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, for sponsoring this event. Rhonda Mims, the president of ING Foundation, Tom Waldron, the executive vice president of ING, and all the chief state school officers here today, thanks for coming. Thanks for honoring the teachers.

When you really think about it, few professionals have as direct an impact on our future as our teachers. Teachers are among our children's first role models, counselors, and friends. Teachers awaken young minds, and teachers encourage ingenuity and unleash fertile imaginations.

It's demanding work to be a teacher, even during its best moments. Sometimes, teachers come across students who require them to summon every last ounce of patience and understanding. When those times come, I just ask you remember, one day that student may become the President. [Laughter]

We ask a lot of our teachers, and we owe them a lot in return. One of the first priorities as President was to work with members of both parties to pass what's called the No Child Left Behind Act. I am—I can't tell you how important this Act is to make sure every child learns to read, write, and add and subtract. The Act insists upon high standards, standards that you all set in your classrooms. Otherwise, you wouldn't be a Teacher of the Year. It says that it's important to measure to determine whether or not our children are learning and meeting standards. Measurement is not a tool to punish; measurement is a tool to correct and reward.

The No Child Left Behind Act is working. In reading, 9-year-olds have made more progress in 5 years than the previous 28 years combined. A President couldn't report that to the Nation unless we actually measured to determine whether that was true. In math, 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds have earned their highest test scores ever. In both reading and math, African American and Hispanic students are scoring higher and beginning to close the achievement gap with their peers.

The structure of the No Child Left Behind Act, the strategy of the Act makes a lot of sense. And that's why the Congress needs to

reauthorize this good law. But the Act wouldn't be working without really dedicated teachers making sure our children learn.

Teaching is more than a profession; it's a calling. And that calling came early to our Teacher of the Year. Andrea Patterson—Peterson knows the importance of education in her life. After all, as she explained to me in the Oval Office, her first role model was her dad, who has taught for more than 30 years. And we welcome you. And we congratulate you on being such a fine dad that your daughter stands here in the Rose Garden as the National Teacher of the Year.

Andrea has got two sisters-in-law who are teachers and a mother-in-law who is a teacher. This is a family that really cares about good grammar. *[Laughter]* I probably wouldn't do all that well at the dinner table. *[Laughter]* When you come from a family of teachers, you tend to develop a life-long appreciation of learning, and more importantly, it enables you to find creative ways to instill that appreciation in others.

Andrea has done some—a lot of amazing work as a music teacher at Monte Cristo Elementary School in Granite Falls, Washington. In her 10 years at Monte Cristo, she has built an impressive music program, almost from scratch. She helped the school purchase instruments, organized an after-school choir, and helped obtain computer programs that allow students to compose their own music. She has integrated music education into other subjects. She's taken novels that children were reading in other classes and turned them into musical productions. She's used musical notes to explain fractions. She's helped students reach out to the community by developing a music program that honored local veterans. She's used music to reach students who are not doing well in the traditional classroom setting.

She's more than a music teacher. One parent said of Andrea this: "Mrs. Peterson is passionate about her job, and it shows." In fact, like any good teacher, Andrea juggles responsibilities that would exhaust all of us. For example, in the past few months, she's taught classes full time, she carried out her obligations as Washington State Teacher of the Year, and took part in the National Teacher of the Year activities. And to top it all off,

4 weeks ago she gave birth to a daughter named Faith. That's what we call multi-tasking. *[Laughter]* Faith probably doesn't know it yet, but she's lucky to have a mom and a dad like the Petersons.

There are a few other teachers who I think deserve mention today, and those are the teachers at Virginia Tech. They did all they could to protect their students from a day of horror, and they're doing all they can to help them heal in the aftermath. One teacher gave his life by using his body to barricade a classroom door while his students jumped to safety from windows. Americans everywhere hold the teachers and students and parents of the Virginia Tech community in our thoughts and in our prayers.

This tragedy has affected at least one of the teachers here in a very personal way, and that would be Susan Evans, who earned her master's degree at Virginia Tech, and we thank you for wearing the Virginia Tech scarf today.

Our Nation is still seeking to make sense of this tragedy, and so are America's children. In fact, one of your hardest jobs is to explain horrific acts to the students. It's a hard job, but I want to thank America's teachers for comforting and encouraging our Nation's youth during difficult moments such as the tragedy at Virginia Tech.

We're fortunate to have teachers like we do in America, men and women who are drawn to the classroom with a desire to serve something larger than themselves. So on behalf of a grateful nation, I thank you for your hard work and your dedication. I thank you for preparing our young children for the challenges of the 21st century. And I thank you for all you do every day to help build a better America.

Congratulations, and welcome to the White House.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:17 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas P. Waldron, executive vice president, human resources and brand, ING North America Insurance Corp.; and Susan Evans, 2007 Virginia State Teacher of the Year. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President. The Office

of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

**Statement on the Death of  
Jack J. Valenti**  
*April 26, 2007*

Laura and I are saddened by Jack Valenti's death. Jack Valenti was a great American and a great Texan. He bravely flew combat missions during World War II and ably served in the White House. From protecting families by creating the movie rating system to advocating for intellectual property rights, Jack Valenti helped transform the motion picture industry. He leaves a powerful legacy in Washington, in Hollywood, and across our Nation.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Jack's wife, Mary Margaret, his children, and his friends and colleagues.

**Proclamation 8133—Asian/Pacific  
American Heritage Month, 2007**  
*April 26, 2007*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

**A Proclamation**

During Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, we honor the many contributions citizens of Asian and Pacific Island ancestry have made to our great land.

The millions of Americans who trace their origins to nations in the Asian/Pacific region have enriched America. The entrepreneurship and innovation of Asian/Pacific Americans have strengthened our economy. Asian/Pacific Americans enrich our Nation with their strong values of love of family and community. Many Asian/Pacific Americans are serving the cause of freedom and peace around the world, and our Nation is grateful for their service. These good men and women defend our safety and contribute to the character and greatness of America.

To honor the achievements and contributions of Asian/Pacific Americans, the Congress, by Public Law 102-450, as amended, has designated the month of May each year as "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month."

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 2007 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. I call upon the people of the United States to learn more about the history of Asian/Pacific Americans and their many contributions to our Nation and to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:00 a.m., April 30, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 1.

**The President's News Conference  
With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of  
Japan at Camp David, Maryland**  
*April 27, 2007*

**President Bush.** Thank you. Welcome. Mr. Prime Minister, Shinzo, welcome to Camp David. I thank you very much for making the long journey. I also thank you for bringing your gracious wife to dinner last night.

The Abes and Laura and I had a really good dinner. It was very relaxed. The Prime Minister married very well. I was so impressed by Akie's compassion, her intelligence. And I will tell you, Shinzo, that Laura feels like she has a new friend now, and so do I. So we're really glad you're here.

We had the kind of discussion you'd expect allies to have. I would describe the talks as—first of all, Shinzo and I met alone for a good period of time. Our talks were very relaxed, but they were strategic. We think about the interest of our country, and we think about the interest of maintaining peace in the world. The alliance between Japan and the United States has never been stronger, and the Prime Minister and I will work hard to keep it that way. It's in the interest of our peoples that we work closely.